

Washington, DC - Saturday, Congressman Harry Teague announced that he is calling on President Barack Obama to convene a bipartisan White House summit focused on stemming the drug violence that has plagued the U.S. border with Mexico. The meeting would aim to build a policy to address this crisis, ensure that the violence does not spill over into the United States, and help us get back to work building our border economies.

"There is no easy solution to the violence that has resulted in thousands of drug and gang-related deaths in these border communities. Nor is there a simple way to make absolutely sure that we can prevent the chaos from spilling over into this country," Congressman Harry Teague writes in the letter. "However, we believe that the only way to begin to address the violence at our border and protect our country is to organize a concerted and comprehensive effort that addresses every cause of the violence and every threat posed to the American people."

This past week, Congressman Teague, Vice-Chair of the U.S. House Border Caucus, and several other members of the Caucus met with Mexican Ambassador, Arturo Sarukhán, this week to discuss recent events, including the murders of two American citizens in Ciudad Juarez last week.

The full text of the letter is below:

March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2010

Dear Mr. President:

The recent murders of two American citizens and a Mexican national connected to the U.S. consulate in Ciudad Juarez serve as a tragic reminder of the potential threat posed to our nation by the tidal wave of violence that has inundated Mexico's northern border region. Over the past three years, as the violence has raged in Mexico, legitimate economic activity has deteriorated, the fabric of society has been torn apart, and an estimated 15,000 people have been murdered, often brutally so. Thus far, the violence has largely been limited to Mexican territory. However, it is reasonable to question how long such a level of violence, dysfunction, and disorder can be sustained on one side of our 2,000 mile border without millions of Americans eventually feeling its effect.

According to the 2008 *National Drug Threat Assessment*, "the Southwest Border Region is the most significant national-level storage, transportation, and transshipment area for illicit drug shipments that are destined for drug markets throughout the United States." Further, "the region is the principal arrival zone for most drugs smuggled into the United States," and "Mexican [drug trafficking organizations] have developed sophisticated and expansive drug transportation networks extending from the Southwest Border to all regions of the United States."

Given the penetration into American territory that Mexican drug cartels have achieved and the cartels' investments in U.S. drug shipment networks, we must take seriously the possibility that Mexican drug violence could spill over into American communities.

There is no easy solution to the violence that has ripped apart Mexican communities and left thousands dead. Nor is there a simple way to make absolutely sure that we can prevent the chaos from spilling over into this country. However, we believe that the only way to begin to address the violence at our border and protect our country is to organize a concerted and comprehensive effort that addresses every cause of the violence and every threat posed to the American people.

Therefore, we request that you organize a White House Summit to address the threat of Mexican drug violence. Such a Summit can provide the basis for a policy blueprint to address this crisis so we can ensure that the violence does not spill over into the United States and get back to work growing our border economies.

Thank you for your service to this nation.

Sincerely,

Harry Teague

Member of Congress

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